

# THE MASAI

## THEIR LANGUAGE AND FOLKLORE

BY  
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WITH INTRODUCTION BY  
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'L-omon	lo-'l-kurto	ō-j-i	Kunju <sup>1</sup>
The-news	of-the-caterpillar	which-called-is	Kunju
	oo 'n-dōkitin	o'sero.	
	and the-things	of-the-forest.	

E-isho-o	opa,	n-e-lo	ol-kurto
He-gave (or did-this)	formerly,	and-he-goes	the-caterpillar
eng-aji	e-'n-gitōjo.		
the-hut	of-the-hare.		

N-e-lōtu	en-gitōjo	e-iñgu-a	e-lilit-a,
And-he-comes	the-hare	he-leaves-thither } (or comes-from)	he-walks-(himself),

n-ē-jo	wōu	kutuk-aji <sup>2</sup>	n-e-dol
and-he-says	come	mouth-hut (or door),	and-he-sees

i-roruat	o-'l-kurto,	n-ē-jo	en-gitōjo :
the-footsteps	of-the-caterpillar,	and-he-says	the-hare :

'Ainyō	na-tii	eng-aji	ai ?'
'What	which-is-there	the-hut	my ?'

N-ē-jo	ol-kurto	to-'l-toilo	kitok :	'Nanu
And-he-says	the-caterpillar	with-the-voice	big :	'I

ol-murani	lo-Le-kiado !	o-ibil-o	
the-warrior	of-The-long-one !	whom-they-unfastened-become	

'mungen	ki-ar-á	te-Kurtiale.	A-purd-aki
the-anklets	we-strike-with-one-another } (or fight)	in-Kurtiale.	I-crush-to

e-muny	en-gop !	N-a-ita-a	
the-rhinoceros	the-earth !	And-I-make-become (or make)	

le-'ng-aina	e-mōdioi !	Nanu,	m-e-itē-u-nō-yu <sup>3</sup> .
of-the-arm } (or elephant)	the-cow's-dung !	I,	not-it-venture-itself-will.'

N-e-iny-ōtōto	en-gitōjo	a-lo,	n-ē-jo :	'He !
And-he-arises	the-hare	to-go,	and-he-says :	'Ho !

a	i-jo	ol-o-ita-a	le-'ng-aina
you-are	you-say	the-who-made	of-the-arm (or elephant)

e-mōdioi ;	nanu	adde	n-a-ik'-aja ?'
the-cow's-dung ;	I	afterwards	and-I-do-how ?'

<sup>1</sup> Ol-kurto is the name of any caterpillar, but more especially the caterpillars of the geometer species ; ol-kurto ōji kunju is the name given to hairy caterpillars.

<sup>2</sup> And when he comes to the door.

<sup>3</sup> It is I ; nobody will venture to attack me.

N-e-lo And-he-goes	en-gitōjo, the-hare,	n-e-tum and-he-gets (or sees)	en-derash, the-jackal,
n-ē-jō-ki: and-he-him-says-to:	'Aa-ta-sai-ya, 'I-you-have-prayed,		
maa-pe let-us-go	pe so-that	i-lo you-go	le-papa O-the-father
ol-kitok-tuñgani the-big-man	ai. my.'		
ō-tii who-is-there	eng-aji the-hut	ai. my.'	
N-e-pwo, And-they-go,	n-e-isho and-he-gives (or does this)	en-derash the-jackal	pe when
e-ba-iki he-reaches	ālo neighbourhood	e-'ng-aji, of-the-hut,	n-e-buak, and-he-cries-out,
n-ē-jo: and-he-says:	'Waa Waa. (Noise resembling a jackal's cry.)		Ainyô 'What
na-tii which-is-there	eng-aji the-hut	e-'n-gitōjōni <sup>1</sup> of-the-hare	ai?' my?'
N-ē-jo And-he-says	ol-kurto: the-caterpillar:	'Nanu 'I	ol-murani the-warrior
lo-Le-kiado! of-The-long-one!	o-ibil-o whom-they-unfastened-become		'mungen the-anklets
ki-ar-á we-fight	te-Kurtiale! in-Kurtiale!	A-purd-aki I-crush-to	e-muny the-rhinoceros
N-a-ita-a And-I-make	le-'ng-aina of-the-arm (or elephant)		en-gop! the-earth!
Nanu, I,	m-e-itē-u-nō-yu. not-it-venture-itself-will.'		e-mōdioi! the-cow's-dung!
N-ē-jō-ki And-he-says-to	en-derash the-jackal	en-gitōjo: the-hare:	'M-a-itē-u 'Not-I-venture
taa well	nanu I	elle. this-one.'	
N-e-lo And-he-goes	en-gitōjo, the-hare,	n-e-tum and-he-gets } (or sees) }	ol-keri, the-spotted-one } (or leopard), }
n-ē-jō-ki: and-he-him-says-to:	'Maa-pe 'Let-us-go		
ol-kitok-tuñgani the-big-man	pe so-that	i-lo you-go	a-irór-ie to-talk-with
ō-tii who-is-there	eng-aji the-hut	ai. my.'	
N-ē-jō-ki: And-he-him-says-to:	'Maa-pe. 'Let-us-go.'		

<sup>1</sup> Poetical form.

N-e-pwo, And-they-go,	n-e-ba-ya, and-they-arrive-thither,	n-ē-jo and-he-says
ol-keri : the-spotted-one ( <i>or</i> leopard) :	'Ainyô 'What	na-tii which-is-there
e-'n-gitōjōni of-the-hare	ai ? my ?	eng-aji the-hut
N-ē-jo And-he-says	ol-kurto : the-caterpillar :	'Nanu 'I
lo-Le-kiado ! of-The-long-one !	o-ibil-o whom-they-unfastened-become	'mungen the-anklets
ki-ar-á we-fight	te-Kurtiale ! in-Kurtiale !	A-purd-aki I-crush-to
	e-muny the-rhinoceros	en-gop ! the-earth !
N-a-ita-a And-I-make	le-'ng-aina of-the-arm ( <i>or</i> elephant)	e-mōdioi ! the-cow's-dung !
		Nanu, I,
m-e-itē-u-nō-yu. not-it-venture-itself-will.'		
N-ē-jo And-he-says	ol-keri : the-spotted-one } ( <i>or</i> leopard) :	'Pasa ! 'Ah!
		e-purd he-crushes
ol-le-'ng-aina, the-of-the-arm ( <i>or</i> elephant),	o and	e-muny, the-rhinoceros,
		o nanu. and I.'
N-e-lo And-he-goes	en-gitōjo, the-hare,	n-e-ipot and-he-calls
		e-muny, the-rhinoceros,
n-ē-jō-ki : and-he-him-says-to :	'Wōu, 'Come,	aa-ta-sai-ya, I-you-have-prayed,
		ta-ar-ai strike-thither } ( <i>or</i> drive-away)
ol-tuñgani the-man	ō-tii who-is-there	eng-aji the-hut
		ai. my.'
N-e-lōtu And-he-comes	e-muny, the-rhinoceros,	n-ē-jo : and-he-says :
		'Añgae 'Who
ō-tii who-is-there	eng-aji the-hut	e-'n-gitōjōni of-the-hare
		ai ? my ?
N-ē-jo And-he-says	ol-kurto : the-caterpillar ;	'Nanu 'I
lo-Le-kiado ! of-The-long-one !	o-ibil-o whom-they-unfastened-become	'mungen the-anklets
ki-ar-á we-fight	te-Kurtiale ! in-Kurtiale !	A-purd-aki I-crush-to
		e-muny the-rhinoceros
		en-gop ! the-earth !
N-a-ita-a And-I-make	le-'ng-aina of-the arm ( <i>or</i> elephant)	e-mōdioi ! the-cow's-dung !
		Nanu, I,
m-e-itē-u-nō-yu. not-it-venture-itself-will.'		

Ore Now	pe when	e-niñg he-hears	e-muny the-rhinoceros	lello-rorei, these-words,
n-ē-jo : and-he-says :	'He! 'Ho!	Ai! What!	nēja thus	e-tiu ? it-is-like ?
addē afterwards	nanu. me.	A-lo I-go	taa well	nanu. I.'
N-e-lo And-he-goes	en-gitōjo, the-hare,	n-e-ipot and-he-calls	ol-le-'ng-aina, the-of-the-arm	(or elephant),
n-e-lōtu, and-he-comes,	n-ē-jo : and-he-says :	'Ainyō 'What	na-tii which-is-there	eng-aji the-hut
e-'n-gitōjōni of-the-hare	ai ? my ?			
N-ē-jo And-he-says	ol-kurto : the-caterpillar :	'Nanu 'I	ol-murani the-warrior	
lo-Le-kiado ! of-The-long-one !	o-ibil-o whom-they-unfastened-become		'mungen the-anklets	
ki-ar-á we-fight	te-Kurtiale ! in-Kurtiale !	A-purd-aki I-crush-to	e-muny the-rhinoceros	en-gop ! the-earth !
N-a-ita-a And-I-make	le-'ng-aina of-the-arm (or elephant)	e-mōdioi ! the-cow's-dung !	Nanu, I,	
m-e-itē-u-nō-yu. not-it-venture-itself-will.'				
N-ē-jo And-he-says	ol-le-'ng-aina : the-of-the-arm } (or elephant) :	'Añgaa ! 'Hah !	á-itá-i it-me-made-is	
addē afterwards	nanu me	e-mōdioi. the-cow's-dung.	M-a-itē-u Not-I-venture	pae and
nanu I	elle. this-one.'			
N-e-dol And-he-sees	en-gitōjo the-hare	en-dua, the-frog,	n-ē-jō-ki : and-he-him-says-to :	
'Wōu, 'Come,	pasinai, please,	i-'ñgur-ai look-thither (or see)	anake if	i-ndim you-are-able
a-ita-y-u to-take-out-hither	ol-tuñgani the-man	ō-ta-la-ikī-nōte-ki whom-they-have-unable-been		
ō-tii who-is-there	eng-aji the-hut	ai. my.'		
N-ē-jō-ki And-he-him-says-to	en-dua : the-frog :	'Maa-pe.' 'Let-us-go.'		



N-e-pwo, And-they-go,	n-e-ba-ya, and-they-arrive-thither,	n-ē-jo and-he-says
en-dua : 'Añgae the-frog : 'Who	ō-tii who-is-there	eng-aji e-'n-gitōjōni ai ? the-hut of-the-hare my ?

N-ē-jo And-he-says	ol-kurto : the-caterpillar :	'Nanu 'I	ol-murani the-warrior
lo-Le-kiado ! of-The-long-one !	o-ibil-o whom-they-unfastened-become	'mungen the-anklets	
ki-ar-á we-fight	te-Kurtiale ! in-Kurtiale !	A-purd-aki I-crush-to	e-muny the-rhinoceros
		en-gop ! the-earth !	
N-a-ita-a And-I-make	le-'ng-aina of-the-arm (or elephant)	e-mōdioi ! the-cow's-dung !	Nanu, I,

m-e-itē-u-nō-yu !  
not-it-venture-itself-will !

N-e-itō-ki And-he-him-does-again	en-dua the-frog	a-igut-aki, to-move-towards,	n-ē-jo : and-he-says :
'A-ēuo 'I-have-come	eng-oiñgōni, the-strong-person,	en-dyañgadad, the-leaper,	n-a-ata and-I-have
'n-duli the-buttocks	'n-e-'ñgape, the-of-the-post,	n-aa-pik-i and-it-me-put-in-is	eng-Aī the-God

e-mākūke.  
the-vileness.'

N-e-ikirikir-a And-he-trembles-(himself)	ol-kurto. the-caterpillar.
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N-e-nyik-aa And-he-pushes-thither (or approaches-thither)	en-dua. the-frog.
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N-ē-jo And-he-says	ol-kurto the-caterpillar	e-ikirikir-a : he-trembles-(himself) :	'Nanu 'I
kul-to <sup>1</sup> , caterpillar,	nanu I	kul-to.' caterpillar.'	

Ōnaa, Well,	n-e-ibuñg and-they-him-seize	i-ñgwēsin the-animals	aa-yet-u, to-drag-hither,
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n-e-'ya-u and-they-him-bring	boo, ouside-the-hut,	n-e-kweni and-it-laughs	pōki-tōki every-thing
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na-tii which-is-there	inne here	te-'n-daboi at-the-trouble	n-a-ita-yo which-it-put-out-thither
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ol-kurto.  
the-caterpillar.

<sup>1</sup> The change of *r* to *l* signifies something weak or small.

THE STORY OF THE CATERPILLAR AND THE  
WILD ANIMALS.

Once upon a time a caterpillar entered a hare's house when the owner was absent. On his return the hare noticed the marks on the ground, and cried out: 'Who is in my house?' The caterpillar replied in a loud voice: 'I am the warrior-son of the long one, whose anklets have become unfastened in the fight in the Kurtiale country. I crush the rhinoceros to the earth, and make cow's dung of the elephant! I am invincible!'

The hare went away saying: 'What can a small animal like myself do with a person who tramples an elephant under foot like cow's dung?' On the road he met the jackal, and asked him to return with him and talk with the big man who had taken possession of his house. The jackal agreed, and when they reached the place, he barked loudly, and said: 'Who is in the house of my friend the hare?'

The caterpillar replied: 'I am the warrior-son of the long one, whose anklets have become unfastened in the fight in the Kurtiale country. I crush the rhinoceros to the earth, and make cow's dung of the elephant! I am invincible!' On hearing this the jackal said: 'I can do nothing against such a man,' and left.

The hare then fetched the leopard, whom he begged to go and talk with the person in his house. The leopard, on reaching the spot, grunted out: 'Who is in the house of my friend the hare?' The caterpillar replied in the same manner as he had done to the jackal, and the leopard said: 'If he crushes the elephant and the rhinoceros, he will do the same to me.'

They went away again, and the hare sought out the rhinoceros. The latter, on arriving at the hare's house, asked who was inside, but when he heard the caterpillar's reply, he said: 'What, he can crush me to the earth! I had better go away then.'

The hare next tried the elephant, and asked him to come to his assistance, but on hearing what the caterpillar had to say, the elephant remarked that he had no wish to be trampled under foot like cow's dung, and departed.

A frog was passing at the time, and the hare asked him if he could make the man who had conquered all the animals leave his house. The frog went to the door and asked who was inside. He received the same reply as had been given to the others, but instead of leaving,

he went nearer, and said: 'I, who am strong and a leaper, have come. My buttocks are like the post, and God has made me vile.'

When the caterpillar heard this, he trembled, and as he saw the frog coming nearer, he said: 'I am only the caterpillar.'

The animals who had collected near seized him, and dragged him out; and they all laughed at the trouble he had given.

'L-omon      lo-'l-murani      oo      'l-Lumbwa.  
The-news      of-the-warrior      and      the-Lumbwa.

E-i-sho-o      opa,      n-e-pwo      l'-muran  
They-gave (*or did-this*)      formerly,      and-they-go      the-warriors  
ol-pul,  
the-slaughter-house.

Ore      e-ti-ōyo      to-'l-pul,  
Now      they-have-not-yet-retained      from-the-slaughter-house,  
n-ē-pwōnu      'l-Lumbwa,      n-e-'ya      'n-gīshu,  
and-they-come      the-Lumbwa,      and-they-take      the-cattle,  
n-ē-ar      sii      en-gerai      na-tii      shoo.  
and-they-kill      also      the-child      who-is-there      grazing-ground.

N-e-lo      en-dito      a-ipot      ol-alashe      lenye  
And-she-goes      the-girl      to-call      the-brother      her  
to-'l-pul,      n-ē-jo:      'Le-muran,  
from-the-slaughter-house,      and-she-says:      'O-the-warriors,

kullo      lo-'l-ō-pur-u<sup>1</sup>,      e-ipir-a  
these      of-the-which-smokes,      it-directed-towards-becomes  
en-derit      il-Lumbwa,      n-e-saisai  
the-dust      the-Lumbwa,      and-she-is-near-bearing

eng-ayus,      n-e-rash-a      'ng-asho  
the-black-and-white-cow,      and-they-blotched-become      the-small-calves

'sederi,      n-e-ibelibel      il-oiñgok  
the-sides-of-the-head,      and-they-move-to-and-fro      the-bulls

i-ruga,      n-e-nuk-a      en-gerai  
the-humps,      and-he-buried (*or hidden*)-becomes      the-child

to-'rēgie,      oo-rash-a      kurumi      lanci<sup>2</sup>.  
by-the-path,      who-blotched-become      lower-part-of-the-backs      my.'

<sup>1</sup> Another term for the slaughter-house.

<sup>2</sup> Another name for ol-kipise, or apron of goat's skin which the warriors wear when proceeding on a journey.